



Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Furharvester Activity Summary, 2008-09



Matt Peek, furbearer biologist

Licenses: A total of 6358 adult and 194 junior resident furharvesting licenses were sold in 2008. This is the most licenses sold in 20 years (since 1988), and represents a 16% increase in resident license sales over the five-year average.

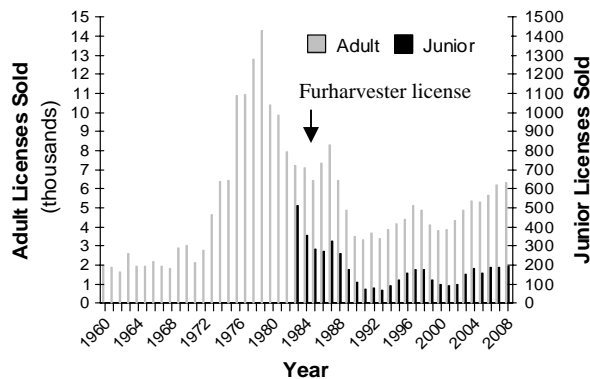


Figure 1. Resident furharvester license sales in KS, 1960-2008.

Nonresident furharvester licenses have been available in Kansas since 1983. Sixty-four were sold in 2008. Demand for these licenses has increased dramatically the last few years, perhaps reflecting the value and availability of bobcats in Kansas.

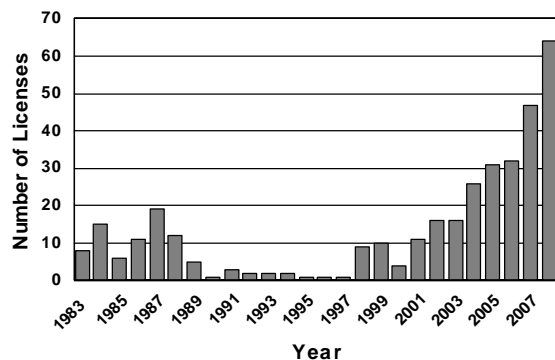


Figure 2. Nonresident furharvester license sales in Kansas, 1983-2008.

Seasons: Furbearer hunting and trapping seasons open statewide the Wednesday following the second Saturday in November. Badger, bobcat, red fox, gray fox, swift fox,

opossum, raccoon, striped skunk and weasel may be hunted or trapped, and mink and muskrat may be trapped - through February 15. Beaver may only be trapped, and their season runs through March 31 (Figure 3).

Historically, the raccoon has been the most important furbearer species in Kansas in terms of total harvest and pelt value, and season dates are set to roughly correspond with the time when raccoons are prime (Figure 3). In addition to ensuring the different species are conserved, emphasis is placed on having season open for all species at the same time – so a bobcat taken incidentally by a raccoon trapper in November can be kept, and a raccoon taken incidentally in February by a bobcat trapper can be kept. Over 100,000 user days are spent annually hunting and trapping furbearers in Kansas.

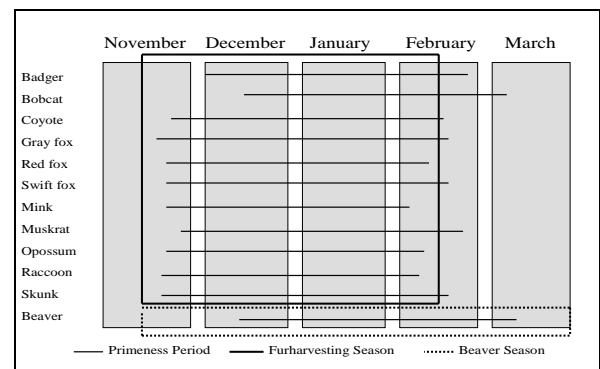


Figure 3. Pelt primeness dates for Kansas furbearers as indicated by Kansas furdealers.

Harvest and Furdealer Purchases:

Total harvest and the number of furbearers purchased by furdealers decreased for most species in 2008 from the previous season (Table 1). Beaver, muskrat, raccoon and opossum saw slight increases in furdealer purchases. The slight increase in raccoon and opossum purchases contradicts the drop

in pelt values that occurred, and probably reflects the fact that many furharvesters had prepared to trap raccoons this season, following last years high pelt prices and optimistic market predictions.

Table 1. Furbearer Harvest and Furdealer Purchases of Kansas Furbearers, 2008-09.

Species	Total Harvest**	Total Purchases***	% Change in purchases from previous year
Badger	1,619	505	-23.5%
Beaver	6,855	1,786	+11.1%
Bobcat	4,080*	2,127	-45.7%
Coyote	27,100	4,550	-42.9%
Grey Fox	84	25	-28.6%
Red Fox	707	178	-22.9%
Swift Fox	98*	20	-50.0%
Mink	177	57	-25.0%
Muskrat	5,767	1,624	+40.7%
Opossum	46,113	5,397	+41.3%
Raccoon	85,061	40,339	+3.4%
Skunk	16,748	1,400	-20.7%

*From pelt tagging records rather than Furbearer Harvest Survey

**From annual Furbearer Harvest Survey

***From furdealer record books

Table 2. Pelt Values of Kansas Furbearers, 2008-09

Species	Average Pelt Price*	Average KFHA Auction Pelt Price **	% Change from previous season*
Badger	\$9.89	\$10.04	-22.1%
Beaver	\$9.39	\$7.57	-19.6%
Bobcat	\$41.07	\$29.82	-51.8%
Coyote	\$6.95	\$7.44	-44.4%
Gray Fox	\$13.03	\$8.00	-59.8%
Red Fox	\$11.78	\$8.47	-29.7%
Swift Fox	\$9.03	-	-40.8%
Mink	\$8.78	\$7.90	-28.1%
Muskrat	\$2.53	\$2.26	+8.6%
Opossum	\$0.93	\$0.54	-14.7%
Raccoon	\$7.95	\$5.54	-46.4%
Striped Skunk	\$2.42	\$2.02	-49.1%

*From annual Furdealer Pelt Price and Primeness Survey.

**From Kansas Fur Harvesters Assoc. Auctions (Jan 19 & Feb 23, 2008).

Pelt Values: Furbearer pelt values decreased for every species in 2008-09 except muskrat, which experienced a slight increase in value. Most importantly, prices of raccoon, bobcat, and coyote, our three most important species as far as total pelt value, decreased from last season by nearly 50%. This decrease will likely be reflected in license sales and furbearer harvest in the coming season, and stands in sharp contrast to the optimism leading into the past few seasons that resulted in a 20 year high in license sales.

Kansas furdealers purchased an estimated \$477,000 of pelts from furbearers harvested in Kansas in 2008-09. (This estimate does not include the value of pelts harvested in Kansas but sold out-of-state, kept for personal use, or discarded.) Raccoon was by far the most important furbearer in terms of total pelt value, accounting for about 67% (\$321,000) of the total value of pelts harvested in Kansas, while bobcat declined in significance from 32% last year to 18% (\$87,000). Coyote (7%; \$32,000) and beaver (4%, 17,000) were the only other species that accounted for more than 2% of the total value of pelts. As indicated in figure 4, this is in contrast with a predominantly beaver/mink/muskrat market of the pre-1970's.

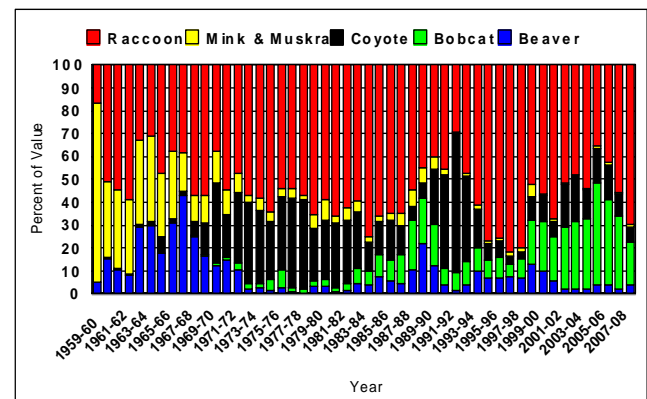


Figure 4. Relative cumulative value of select furbearers purchased by Kansas furdealers, 1959-2008.